

Informal Pathway

Learner Profile

Learners following the informal curriculum have complex SLD, SLD/Autism usually working within the Engagement Model (P Levels P1-P4) or the pre-key stage standards (P Levels P4-P5). These learners have considerable sensory sensitivities that may be expressed both through the five main senses of touch, hearing, sight, taste and smell, but may also be evident within the kinaesthetic, proprioceptive and vestibular senses.

Through their lessons, our learners learn to trust the adults and the adults learn about the learners' abilities and preferred communication approaches, their feelings, their likes and dislikes. If the learners have not yet built up a repertoire of interests, we can then find objects and activities of interest through the safe and secure 'friendship' that has developed through the sessions. When these interests have been established, they can be used to motivate the learners to communicate, express themselves and develop independence.



We provide a personalised curriculum that:

- Gives breadth of challenging experience that celebrates all achievements. Some learners in this group are working beyond the Engagement Model in specific areas, and are supported to access an informal curriculum in those areas
- Gives opportunities for learners to extend their learning and skills through experiencing a wide range of activities
- Promotes independence through developing skills that enable learners to make their emotional and physical needs known

Whole School Approach

We have common themes in place across the curriculum, which aim to be interesting, engaging and appropriate for our learners and that provide relevant learning contexts for them to grow. The topics we teach are the vehicle for new learning to take place and to enable learners to make progress.

Lessons - Growth and development only happen when a learner feels safe, settled, secure and happy; these elements are at the heart of all we do, ensuring learners feel welcome and a part of their class and the wider school community. To help achieve a learner's full potential, our lessons are:

- Multi-sensory
- Tactile
- Exploratory
- Stimulating
- Relevant
- Individualised

To aid communication in lessons, we use a wide range of communication methods. On the informal curriculum you might see use of:

- Symbols

- Learning through exploring
- Objects of reference
- Photo support/visual use
- Intensive Interaction
- Chat boards
- Now and Next prompts
- Big Mack interactive buttons and Talking Tins
- Sensory regulation/sensory diet
- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
- Songs of reference/for transition
- Social stories
- PODD books
- Makaton signing
- AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)
- Key word language



Curriculum

Our classes follow termly topics from the relevant Key Stage Long Term Plan. The subject areas and lesson objectives are largely taken from the EQUALS curriculum, building to provide learners the opportunity to make progress against their EHCP, learner-specific targets. The EQUALS curriculum areas are:

- My Sensory Play
- My Independence
- My Creativity
- My Communication
- My Outdoor School
- My Physical Well-being
- Enrichment

Assessment

Learner progress is assessed on an ongoing basis, with staff capturing evidence regularly using an interactive recording tool called Evidence for Learning (EFL) and the Engagement Model. The Engagement Model is used as a national assessment tool to help support learners who are working below the level of the National Curriculum and are not engaged in subject-specific study. The learners focus on developing the engagements skills of exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence, and initiation. These skills are monitored throughout the year to moderate the level of engagement on the informal curriculum. Some learners in years 2 and 6 will be assessed using the pre-key stage standards. These provide a statutory assessment of learners engaged in subject-specific study who are working below the overall standard of the national curriculum tests and teacher assessment framework. Evidence collected includes observations, photographs, videos and learners' work. Parents and carers can access EFL to see the progress of their child and are able to add supportive comments.

Progress is assessed against learner-specific set targets taken from a bespoke framework consisting of '*I will*' statements suitable for the pathway. Progress towards personal targets is reviewed at key points through the year, with new targets being set as appropriate in a cycle of '*assess, plan, review, do*'. Targets are set to support the learners work towards their long-term goals, as set in the EHCP SEND profiles. As a short-term target is met, a new target that will further them towards their overall, long term goal will be set.

At Key Stages 4 and 5 there are opportunities for learners to complete sensory-based accreditations.

Beyond Dorin Park

Typically, our informal pathway learners continue to develop their life skills through accessing a bespoke package of activities. There are a range of care providers in the local area that can provide day services for young people.

For some learners a specialist college may be appropriate, so that they can continue to develop communication, independence and life skills.